

RECENT ADDITIONS TO FISH EXHIBITS IN THE MUSEUM.

The public galleries have been enriched with a fine specimen of a Sailfish, *Istiophorus gladius*, which was caught at Mombasa and presented by the Kenya Fish Supply Company.

The specimen is 8 feet long from the tip of the sword to the end of the tail and would weigh round about 160 lbs. when freshly caught.

The Sailfish belongs to the Family *Istiophoridae* of which there are three genera in the Indian Ocean; *Tetrapterus* (Spearfish), *Istiophorus* (Sailfish), and *Makaira* (Striped Marlin). There is another Family *Xiphiidae* (true Swordfish). No records have been received of the latter from our waters.

The principal external difference between the three genera is the size of the dorsal fin which, in the Sailfish, is very large, becoming smaller until in the true Swordfish (*Xiphias*) it is like that of a shark.

Their principal food are small fishes which they kill by going into a shoal and striking right and left with the sword. The dead and injured members are then picked up in a leisurely manner. The small specimens of about 40-60 pounds arrive off our coastline during October, but large specimens delay their appearance until January and leave at the end of March.

In size they reach 16 feet in length, but the average specimen caught by native fishermen is about 120 pounds.

Sailfish give every sport on rod and line.

Another addition is a Rhino Fish (*Barbus rhinoceros*) taken from the Athi River and presented by Mr. Playford.

This fish is very like the Indian "Mahseer," but can be distinguished from all the other *Barbus* of Eastern Africa by the pronounced horn which is so evident when the lips are drawn out.

This fish can attain 35 pounds in weight, and is also reported from the Tana River, although no specimens have, so far, been received.

Its food would appear to be small fish of the species *Barbus*, the Athi River prawn (*Palaemon lar*, F.), and the Fresh Water Swan Mussel.

The smaller specimens can be taken with a fly, but the large fish take a small *Barbus* drifted down the heavy water at the head of the pools or by ledgering in deep water. They can be seen feeding in the big pools late in the day, chasing the bait in various directions. Some specimens, when hooked, fight well, while others give up after

one long run, but all take a delight in finding every under-water obstruction in a river.

The last addition is a specimen of the Elephant Snout Fish (*Mormyrus tenuirostris*). This specimen also came from the Athi River and can be immediately recognised by its long flexible snout which is pushed into the soft mud when feeding. Mud, worms, under-water insects, etc., are sucked up and the parts digested. In life this fish is covered with a heavy coating of slime which is said to have poisonous qualities, and in addition electrical impulses are generated when touched.

This fish is usually caught when fishing with a worm for *Tilapia*, and they give little or no sport when hooked.

One species from the Congo is said to be most delicious eating, but the same cannot be said for those from the Athi River.

HUGH COPLEY.